

“When I am in school, I feel treated very differently because my mother is a single woman and because I don’t have any citizenship.”

Miraz, Nepal

“I want to find work so I can support my wife and children. I want nationality. I want to stop suffering.”

Yousef, Madagascar

“I want to see my children go to school just as others do. Their future is in jeopardy.”

Sapana, Nepal.

“For many things in Kenya you need an identity card. Since I got my card there is a sense of belonging.”

Francine, Kenya

Find Out More

The Equal Rights Trust and its partners in the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights are working to eliminate gender discrimination in nationality laws, to help women and their families access equal rights and live better lives.

As part of this project, the Trust carried out research in Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar and Nepal and detailed its findings in the report, *My Children’s Future: Ending Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws*.

To download the report, find out more about the Trust and the Campaign, please visit:

www.equalrightstrust.org
www.equalnationalityrights.org

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Ending Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws

Advancing equality for women and their families worldwide



Stephan Bachheimer/World Bank



The Problem

Twenty-seven countries discriminate against women through laws which prevent them from passing on their nationality to their children on an equal basis with men. Over 60 countries do not allow women the same rights as men to change, acquire or retain their nationality, including by denying them the ability to confer their nationality to their non-national spouse. These gender discriminatory nationality laws may lead to statelessness.

How Families Are Affected

The impacts for those without a nationality in these countries are devastating and can include:

- being unable to access education, healthcare and employment;
- being unable to own or inherit property; and
- feelings of guilt, depression and anxiety.

Those already on the periphery suffer the most severely, including ethnic and religious minorities and the most socio-economically marginalised.



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The Movement for Change

Over the last decade, a number of countries have reformed their laws so that they no longer discriminate against women. These reforms were driven by advocacy campaigns. The Equal Rights Trust spoke to campaigners in Indonesia and Kenya who shared the key ingredients of their successes.



Recommendations for Change

- 1 Countries** that retain gender discriminatory nationality laws are urged to reform these laws, to ensure that mothers can pass on their citizenship to their children and spouses so their families can access services equally.
- 2 Civil society** actors should join the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, draw lessons from other successful advocacy efforts and continue to raise awareness of the impact of gender discriminatory nationality laws.
- 3 The principles of equality and non-discrimination** should be central to all efforts to reform laws, and also in the implementation of reformed laws, with the aim to eliminate discrimination in the conferral of citizenship.